

REMARKS

Claims 1-11 and 13-28 are pending. By this Amendment, claims 1-11 and 13-28 are amended. Claims 2-11, 13-14, and 16-28 have been amended to correct minor informalities. No new matter has been added.

Claim Objections

Claims 13 and 14 stand objected to as being dependent from canceled claim 12. Claims 13 and 14 have been amended to depend from claim 1.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claim 5 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph as being indefinite for failing to point out and particularly claim the subject matter which Applicant regards as the invention. In particular, the Office Action provides that it is unclear what is meant by “adapted to a portion of an attachment bracket.” Claim 5 as been adapted to recite that the first main beam has a side wall including an extension, the extension being adapted to receive a portion of an attachment bracket, the cross beam being couplable to the main beam with the attachment bracket.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1, 5, 15, 19, and 26 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Reissue Patent No. Re. 33,320 to Collier (“Collier”). Claims 1-2, 9, 15-16, and 23 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,676,036 to Bessert

(“Bessert”). Applicant has amended claims 1 and 15 to include limitations not disclosed by Collier or Bessert. Support for the amendments to the claims can be found throughout the specification, such as, for example, at page 5, lines 10-19, page 7, lines 14-17, page 9, lines 4-17, page 13, lines 1-2, and Figures 1-6, 9-11, and 15-17. These amendments are being made without prejudice or disclaimer. Applicant respectfully reserves the right to pursue the original claims or similar claims in future continuing applications.

Amended claims 1 and 15 recite a first main beam having a substantially horizontal top wall, the top wall presenting an integral attachment structure extending above the top wall, the attachment structure including spaced-apart first and second rail sections, the first and second rail sections being substantially parallel. Amended claims 1 and 15 also recite a floor panel including a first floor end beam coupled to a floor board, the floor board presenting top and bottom surfaces, the first floor end beam being disposed on the bottom surface of the floor board and being couplable to an adapter, the adapter being structured to conformingly bear upon the first and second rail sections in slidable relation in a direction substantially parallel to the first and second rail sections whereby the floor panel is supported by the first main beam.

The Office Action provides that both Collier and Bessert disclose an attachment structure of a beam comprising a support section (left vertical leg of 152 Fig. 2 (Collier); 262a of Fig. 3 (Bessert)), a second support section (right vertical leg of 152 of Fig. 2 (Collier); 262c of Fig. 3 (Bessert)). The Office Action further provides that both Collier and Bessert disclose ends of a floor panel including recesses formed therein that are shaped substantially complementary to the upper surfaces of the first and second sections (recesses under the 162 (Collier) sit on 26 (Bessert)).

Neither Collier nor Bessert, however, discloses a floor panel including a first floor end beam coupled to a floor board, the floor board presenting top and bottom surfaces, the first floor end beam being disposed on the bottom surface of the floor board and being couplable to an adapter, the adapter being structured to conformingly bear upon the first and second rail sections in slidable relation in a direction substantially parallel to the first and second rail sections whereby the floor panel is supported by the first main beam. Rather, Collier discloses a panel clamp that requires the use of a positioning pin such that if the panel clamp is not slidable in relation to wall support stringers. (See col. 8, ll. 27-55 & Figs. 2-3.) In particular, Collier states that "*an additional important element* of the floor and wall support is a panel clamp generally designated 170, and shown to include a central opening 172 through which the column may extend, a pair of locating ears 174, each having an opening 176 therethrough *for accommodating a positioning pin 178.*" (Col. 8, ll. 33-38 (emphasis added).) Collier further provides that "once the stringers or combination floor and wall support units are installed with respect to the bracket 140, the panels 162 are placed in the structure, and the clamp 170 is positioned *and pinned in place* to lock the panel units in their desired positions of assembly." (Col. 8, ll. 51-55 (emphasis added).)

Bessert also fails to disclose a floor panel with an adapter being structured to conformingly bear upon and be in parallel slidable relation to rail sections. Rather, Bessert discloses a pan support stringer that requires the use of a pan hold down gasket. (See col. 3, ll. 57-6, col. 4, ll. 15- & Figs. 2-3.) In particular, Bessert provides that "[p]an hold down gaskets 36a, 36b are inserted into grooves formed in each of the support stringers 26 at each level of the module 25, forming an air tight sealing arrangement." (Col. 3, ll. 65-68.) Bessert further

provides that “gusset portion 364 is inserted into groove 262b and pushed downwardly until top portion 360 of pan gasket 36a firmly secures the edges of adjoining second level floor panels to form a generally air tight sealing arrangement.” (Col. 8, ll. 42-46.)

Therefore, claims 1 and 15 are allowable. Amended claim 5 depends from claim 1. Amended claims 19 and 26 depend from claim 15. Claims 5, 19, and 26 are, therefore, allowable for at least the same reasons. The rejection of claims 5, 19, and 26 are traversed but not expressly argued in view of the allowability of the underlying base claims.

For the foregoing reasons, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw the rejections.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 7 and 21 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Collier in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,871,454 to Coday Sr., et al. (“Coday”). Claims 3-4 and 17-18 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Collier in view of Coday and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,503,651 to Pugh (“Pugh”). Claims 8 and 22 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Collier in view of U.S. Patent No. 3,180,460 to Liskey, Jr. (“Liskey”). Claims 13-14 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Collier in view of U.S. Patent No. 2,479,962 to Paulson (“Paulson”). Claims 10-11 and 24-25 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bessert in view of U.S. Patent Application No. 2003/0051420 to Leon (“Leon”). Applicant respectfully traverses these rejections for at least the reasons set forth below.

Claims 3-4, 7-8, 10-11, and 13-14 depend from claim 1. Claims 17-18, 21-22, 24-25, and 27-28 depend from claim 15. Therefore, claims 3-4, 7-8, 10-11, 13-14, 17-18, 21-22, 24-25, and 27-28 are allowable at least for the same reasons as previously set forth in relation to claims 1 and 7. The Examiner cited Coday for disclosing a cross beam including a main section and end sections that are attached to opposite ends of the main section and for disclosing a bolt that is attached to the main beam proximate the first end. The Examiner cited Pugh for disclosing a second end having a locking mechanism comprising a recess that is adapted to receive a bolt and a locking tooth assembly, wherein the locking tooth assembly is movable between a locking position and an unlocking position and the bolt is retained in the recess when the locking tooth assembly is in the locking position. The Examiner cited Liskey Jr. for disclosing floor end beams attached to a lower surface of the floor board proximate ends and a floor side beam extending between the floor end beams. The Examiner cited Paulson for disclosing a main beam stabilizer and a cross beam stabilizer extending from the main beam to the leg and the cross beam and the leg. The Examiner cited Leon for disclosing a locking mechanism that threadably engages the underlying supports.

Coday, Pugh, Liskey, Paulson, or Leon, however, do not make up for the previously noted deficiencies of Collier or Bessert in relation to claims 1 and 15. Specifically, Coday, Pugh, Liskey, Paulson, and Leon fail to disclose a first main beam having a substantially horizontal top wall, the top wall presenting an integral attachment structure extending above the top wall, the attachment structure including spaced-apart first and second rail sections, the first and second rail sections being substantially parallel. Coday, Pugh, Liskey, Paulson, and Leon also fail to disclose a floor panel including a first floor end beam coupled to a floor board, the floor board

presenting top and bottom surfaces, the first floor end beam being disposed on the bottom surface of the floor board and being couplable to an adapter, the adapter being structured to conformingly bear upon the first and second rail sections in slidable relation in a direction substantially parallel to the first and second rail sections whereby the floor panel is supported by the first main beam. Therefore, claims 3-4, 7-8, 10-11, and 13-14, which depend from claim 1, and claims 17-18, 21-22, 24-25, and 27-28, which depend from claim 15, are not unpatentable over Collier or Bessert in view of Coday, Pugh, Liskey, Paulson, or Leon.

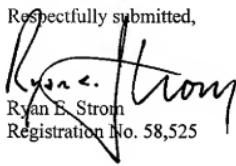
For the foregoing reasons, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw the rejection.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable consideration and prompt allowance of the application are respectfully requested.

The Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned if the Examiner believes it would be useful to advance prosecution.

Respectfully submitted,


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